METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR UNIVERSAL DATA EXCHANGE GATEWAY
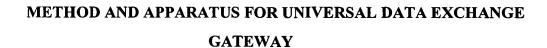
Abstract of the Disclosure

5   A universal gateway that allows data to be transferred between one or more network protocols and one or more control protocols is described. The various protocols can coexist on the same physical network medium or on separate networks. The gateway also provides tunneling of network protocols through a selected protocol, and centralized control of network nodes. By using the gateway, end-users can mesh together traditionally standalone, 10 incompatible, networks into a universally accessible, centrally administered, "super-network." The gateway provides a centralized node database, support for legacy protocols, a rules engine, and an object-oriented class library interface. Configuration is simplified through automatic device discovery. The centralized node database is managed by an active server node. High reliability access to the centralized node database is enhanced by the system fault 15 tolerance provided by standby server nodes. When used in connection with a power line network, the gateway provides the ability to distribute various types of data streams over the power line. Routing handlers provided by the gateway allow virtually any of the legacy data networking services such as TCP/IP to be routed over the power-line.

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